

**Missouri Military Preparedness and Enhancement Commission**  
**Commission Meeting**  
**October 19, 2005**  
**Room 494, Harry S Truman Building, Jefferson City**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Members Attending: Dalton Wright, Rep. David Pearce, Kent Thomas, Craig Borchelt, Bob Welling, Loretta Charleston, Rep. Terry Witte

Others attending: Tony Benz for Sen. Barnitz; Aaron Washburn for Sen. Koster; Alan Stark for Gen. Sidwell; Ron Taylor and Pat Rowe Kerr, MO Veterans Commission; Sharon Gulick, DED

Media: Kermit Miller KRCG; Missouri Net; KLIK; David Leib, Associated Press

Chair Wright opened the meeting and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

**Mr. Thomas moved and Mr. Welling seconded the motion to approve the minutes of the September 21<sup>st</sup> meeting. Motion approved.**

**Missouri Veterans Commission**

Ron Taylor, Executive Director Missouri Veterans Commission and Pat Rowe Kerr, Veterans Ombudsman provided the Commission with information on the history and purpose of the Missouri Veterans Commission. Since its formation in the 1930s the Commission's role and scope has expanded.

Commission, through the support of many key partners in the state, has greatly expanded the funds available to assist veterans and have increased participation by Missouri veterans in programs.

Role and scope of the Commission has changed over the last few years – in the past they worked with veterans after separation from the military, but not begin work with active military personnel before they separate from the service to ensure that they receive their benefits in a timely manner.

Since 9-11 many of the veterans are not regular army but rather National Guard and Reservists. They may or may not receive the same services at the time of separation as do regular military personnel. Unlike traditional military many of the National Guard and Reservists frequently take a major economic hit when they were called up – causing severe economic challenges for their family. Commission is trying to reach the guard and reservists when they return to help identify sources of assistance when they return. Many are facing an immediate problem and can't wait for the claim to move through the traditional process.

Beginning to see changes at the national level to provide more assistance and support to the National Guard and Reservists. Both economic, health and help with finding employment.

MO Veterans Commission interested in working with MMPEC to address economic issues for veterans. Some federal programs have set asides for contracting to ensure inclusion of veterans in the federal contracting opportunities. Federal participation is low. Mr. Taylor feels that the MO Veterans Commission and MMPEC can play an active role in ensuring veterans having access to federal contracting opportunities.

Ms. Kerr outlined her responsibilities as the state's Veterans Ombudsman. She works with a variety of agencies and programs to resolve problems faced by veterans and active military personnel and their families. Missouri is currently the only state to have a Veterans Ombudsman.

Works with a variety of agencies to ensure that veterans and military personnel receive needed medical services. Example given of transportation for military personnel and family for medical services. Also works to find programs and assistance for families seeking help with financial, emotional and other problems.

Need to help educate the communities on the needs of the military and families. Gave example that she is working with a mid-Missouri bank that is trying to foreclosure mortgage on a family of 6 that is behind \$465 on their mortgage.

Talked about upcoming events:

- Trekking for the Troops – fund raiser
- Moving Wall
- Family Military Relief check off on Missouri tax return
- Veterans Trust Fund check off on Missouri tax return

Mr. Welling asked if the position of Ombudsman was created and funded by the Commission or by legislation? Originally, the position was created by the Commission to provide help with identify needs and resources. FTE was included in last year's budget but removed; it is anticipated that it will be included again in next year's budget.

Rep. Pearce asked Mr. Taylor about MMPEC's recommendation to have a member of the Veterans Commission work with MMPEC and vice versa. Mr. Taylor responded that he felt that it was a good idea – need to ensure information sharing and awareness between the two Commissions.

Discussion ensued about legislation to protect active military from home foreclosure and exemption from State income tax. Active military are covered under federal regulations (Soldiers and Sailors) for 90 days, Ms. Kerr suggested extending to 6 months. Chair Wright suggested that we have Ms. Kerr on agenda again at future meeting to provide additional information to the Commission on this issue. Mr. Stark clarified that National Guard that are called up for state emergency duty are not covered by Solider and Sailors.

Mr. Welling also asked that if the Commission should create a ombudsman for the MMPEC. Need to explore this further.

### **Annual Report**

Chair Wright stated that our goal is to approve the content today. Final report will be issued at our November meeting which is currently scheduled for Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup> but may change pending availability of Governor and other key people.

**Mr. Thomas moved and Mr. Welling seconded motion to approve pages 2 and 3 with change of members to reflect current roster. Motion approved.**

Members discussed the impact report. Agreed that the data will be used as a baseline; BRAC will change the numbers, but we will use this report as the baseline measurement. Rep. Pearce questioned the numbers – he felt that the numbers are low especially for Fort Leonard Wood and Whiteman Air Force Base. It was agreed that the report would be included as an attachment to the Annual Report rather than as part of the actual report.

**Mr. Thomas moved that the MERIC Research Brief be included as an attachment to the Annual Report, Mr. Welling seconded the motion. Motion approved.**

Mr. Borchelt requested typo on page 6 be corrected

**Mr. Welling moved and Mr. Borchelt seconded motion to approve pages 6 and 7 as amended. Motion approved.**

Members reviewed the list of 2006 Action Items:

Reword the item that reads: Assist recruiting by having the state provide certificates to new recruits that chose MOS's (Military Occupation Specialty) or AFSC's (Air Force Specialty Code) that are compatible with state civilian jobs guaranteeing them an interview and possibly advantage in jobs selection for open positions.

To read: Assist recruiting by having the state provide certificates to new recruits that chose career fields that are compatible with state civilian jobs guaranteeing them an interview and possibly advantage in jobs selection for open positions.

**Mr. Borchelt moved and Ms. Charleston seconded motion to approve page 8 as amended. Motion approved.**

Change Item E under Quality of Life that currently reads: *Recommend that the Department of Conservation amend state rules to allow active duty personnel stationed in Missouri to purchase Missouri hunting and fishing licenses at the in-state rate.*

To read: *Recommend that the Conservation Commission amend state rules to allow active duty personnel, and their dependents, stationed in Missouri to purchase Missouri hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rates.*

Members discussed the issue of reciprocating licenses. Rep. Pearce reported that he had discussed the issue with several school officials who said the primary issue is the need for a background check. He suggested that if the individual passed a background check in another state, they should be able to be licensed in Missouri. Mr. Welling suggested that teachers could receive an emergency license and could teach pending passing a Missouri background check.

Rep Pearce suggested modifying the wording of item B under Quality of Life from: *Recommend that the Missouri General Assembly amend current state statutes to allow joint reciprocating licenses on jobs such as teachers and nurses.* To read: *Recommend that the Missouri General Assembly consider amending current state statutes to allow for joint reciprocating licenses (e.g., nurses and teachers) and remove obstacles (e.g., provisionally accept out of state background checks) for licensure of a military spouse or dependents of active duty personnel stationed in Missouri to allow these individuals to more quickly enter the Missouri workforce.*

Add a new item to Quality of Life:

*F. Incorporate appropriate provisions of the federal "Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act" into Missouri law.*

Modify wording to the section titled "Ex-Military and Retired Military Initiatives" to read:

The Commission will:

- a. Advocate for a more proactive mechanism to promote the Missouri "Troops to Teachers" program.
- b. Advocate for additional Missouri state military cemeteries.
- c. Advocate for awareness of education and training opportunities for military personnel

Revised Item B, Communication, which currently reads: *Explore the creation of an Office of Military Ombudsman to provide referral information services to military personnel and their dependents when stationed in Missouri under military orders.*

To read: *Explore the creation of an Office of Military Ombudsman to provide referral information services to military personnel and their dependents when stationed in Missouri.*

**Mr. Welling moved and Ms. Charleston seconded the motion to approval changes to page 9. Motion approved.**

**Mr. Welling moved and Rep. Pearce seconded the motion of approve page 10 as written. Motion approved.**

If members have additional comments or suggestions they should forward those to Sharon by November 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Miscellaneous Commission Business**

Chairman Wright introduced the “Partnership for Youth Success Program” (PaYS) to the members. This program was brought to his attention by a contact at FLW. Allows a business to enter into a contract with a individual entering the military that will guarantee an interview after they leave active military service. Kansas has apparently adopted a similar program. He suggested that this may be a program that the State of Missouri would want to consider.

Commission members reviewed the comment forms received from personnel from Fort Leonard Wood. Mr. Welling stated that most of the issues that are identified by the FLW forms seem to have been addressed by our annual report recommendations.

It was suggested that the comment forms dealing with Military Child Education Issues be forwarded to DESE for their consideration.

School board issues are addressed in our 2005 Annual Report.

Mr. Welling provided the members with additional information on having military personnel serving on local school boards. He handed to each member of the Commission a copy of the various emails he had received including from the Office of the Air Force Judge Advocate General in the Pentagon which included a copy of Air Force Regulation Number 51-902 (not 54902 as stated). In short, that regulation, as interpreted by the Staff Judge Advocate at the Pentagon, allows spouses of all military personnel and enlisted military personnel members themselves to serve on a local school board. Officers are not permitted to serve on local school boards and installation commanders are prohibited from appointing military personnel to local school boards, but an installation commander could provide a list of qualified candidates for the president of the local school board to choose from. Mr. Borchelt reported that Army regulations allow for military personnel to serve on nonpartisan school boards. (DOD Directive 1344.10)

Mr. Welling feels that this information allows us to move forward with our goal to have the appropriate local school boards expanded to include military members from the appropriate local installations and that we seek legislation geared to that purpose in the next session.

Chair Wright said that he has spoken with a former Waynesville school board president who suggested that there may have been some opposition in the past, but that the current board might support it. Mr. Wright will ask Judy Castro, the FLW Command General's

wife, to join him in a meeting with the Waynesville school leadership and board to discuss the MMPEC school board proposals later this month or early November.

Members agreed that it will be important to make sure that we have sufficient support in the local communities before we undertake this initiative. While the focus right now is Waynesville and Knob Noster school districts, in the future we may need to also look at creating a formula that addresses other school districts that may have a large number of military dependents but not at the level at these two school districts have. Rep. Pearce has asked House Research to begin work on drafting the legislation.

Consensus to table any discussion of local zoning and building codes.

Other suggestions included in the comment forms included:

- *Missouri to make Federal Military Service retirement pay tax exempt.* Aaron Washburn reported that the fiscal note on such an initiative would be around \$11 million. Mr. Thomas said that those states that are most frequently referred as not taxing military retirement income are states that don't have income taxes. Mr. Washburn also said that there was a US Supreme Court ruling that if you exempt one pension, all pensions would have to be exempted.
- *Establish FLW as premier location for unmanned systems experimentation.* Mr. Borchelt reported that the primary challenge for FLW is limited air service. The current SW Airlines service may be in jeopardy and air service is critical to have a viable business community. As the Commission's 2006 focus will be on the business development aspect of military and defense-related industries, it was agreed to hold this discussion over to next year.
- *Reduce license fees for retired military and low interest mortgages for lower income active military families.* Consensus is that we are not trying to give military personnel and retirees extra benefits, but rather treat all Missouri citizens the same.

Members discussed the issues around children moving into Missouri from another state being eligible to start Kindergarten or First Grade in Missouri. This appears to be an issue primarily when the child comes from a state that has a Pre-K program and would have started Kindergarten in that state. Consensus was that Missouri should recognize the education system in other states. Members also felt that the Board would not address the issue of Missouri's age cutoff date and suggested that this should be done through rule promulgation rather than legislation.

**Mr. Thomas moved and Mr. Borchelt seconded the motion that we add an item "G" to the Quality of Life section of the annual report that would read: *Commission encourages the State Board of Education to promulgate rules to address proper nondiscriminatory transfer of school children from out of state school districts without impediment because of Missouri's August 1 age cutoff requirement. If a child has already completed Kindergarten or Pre-K in another state, and would be progressing***

*into the next grade in that state, then enrollment should be automatic in Missouri.*  
**Motion approved.**

Rep. Pearce provided comments from Whiteman Air Force Base. Most of the issues presented were similar to those from FLW. No action was needed.

Sharon distributed information on the Missouri Defense Business Council. Since we are having some challenges in getting a complete list of the defense prime contractors and their subcontractors, this group may be a source of some information. It was agreed to invite the Executive Director to attend a 2006 meeting.

### **Legislative Action**

Rep. Pearce said that the support of the MMPEC will be critical to legislation for the next session. He is working with House Research to begin drafting legislation. Governor's office will also want to be involved in any legislation that may be introduced. May have some draft language for the November meeting. Both Rep. Pearce and Rep. Witte felt that it was important to move quickly on filing bills.

Members were reminded that they would have the opportunity to testify in support of the proposed legislation. It was also felt that most of the recommended items should have strong support and be non-controversial.

### **Future Commission Meetings**

Next Commission meeting will be November 2<sup>nd</sup> in Room 460, Governor Office Building.

The Commission also set its first meeting for 2006 for January 19, 2006, 1:30 to 4:00 at Capitol. Sharon will work with Aaron Washburn to schedule a hearing room.

Mr. Thomas suggested that at a future meeting we should meet with some of the prime contractors (e.g., Boeing) to find out what their needs are and what the Commission could do to enhance their business opportunities in Missouri – similar to the meetings the Commission had with military facilities.

Members discussed the process of dissemination of the Annual Report. It was agreed that copies should be provided to the Governor and members of the General Assembly. It was felt that sending a summary to the members of the General Assembly might be best, and would save printing costs. A copy of the report should be posted on the web and anyone wanting a copy could download copy of full report. It was also recommended that a copy of the Executive Summary be sent to the commanders at Missouri's military facilities and to those individuals who testified to the Commission.

**Mr. Borchelt moved and Mr. Thomas seconded motion to adjourn. Motion approved.** Meeting adjourned

Minutes Approved:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dalton C. Wright", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

2 November 2005

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Dalton Wright, Chair

Date